Teaching, Learning, and the Student Experience

UC San Diego Strategic Planning

December 12, 2013

This document brings together the strategic planning goals of units in academic affairs and student affairs, including plans for improving graduate and undergraduate education by enhancing the learning experience of students, as well as the teaching experience of faculty, facilitated by the dedicated staff of this campus. There is a great deal of synergy and overlap in the plans from individual units (Student Affairs; Colleges; Graduate Studies; Undergraduate Education; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and the Education Initiative), so this document serves as a coordinated summary that reflects the way in which the units will work together to fulfill our mission.

Education Initiative

The aim of the Education Initiative is to look at ways that UC San Diego can adapt the current best global thinking about high-impact educational strategies to further support the intellectual, academic, cognitive, and social development of our undergraduate and graduate students, and to give faculty access to the latest research on learning and teaching that they can then incorporate into their courses. This integrated effort is especially important as we seek to prepare students for life in a diverse global society in which access, excellence and accountability are inextricably linked.

The Education Initiative currently has two large committees, each with its own sub-groups, working in the areas of *Engaged Teaching* and *Engaged Learning*, with goals outlined below. Thirty-one faculty, staff, and students serve on the Education Initiative Working Group, co-chaired by Dean of Graduate Studies Kim Barrett and Dean of Undergraduate Education Barbara Sawrey.

Engaged Teaching
- Create the infrastructure to support faculty in learning about new technologies and pedagogical methods, including effective strategies for teaching our increasingly diverse student body, as well as how to implement and assess these innovations
- Develop departmental and divisional curriculum-specific real-world skills and cross-cultural competencies to be incorporated in courses and co-curricular activities for both graduate and undergraduate students
- Keep up to date with and communicate about the ongoing campus discussions and experiments regarding technology-enhanced teaching and learning

Engaged Learning
- Create an infrastructure to support the development, delivery, and assessment of programs that address general real-world skills and can be tracked by the "Student Electronic Record System" (SERS) described below
- Implement an integrated three-tier SERS which includes an enhanced electronic transcript (E2T), a co-curricular record (CCR), and an electronic portfolio (EP)
- Develop a First year Transition program that introduces incoming freshmen and transfer students to UC San Diego's unique educational environment (also see College goals, later in this document)

- Develop a robust and rapidly-deployable Early Warning System to identify and intervene with students at risk, in order to link them with appropriate support services on campus

Benchmarks for success include a 2014-15 implementation plan for beginning the process of coordinating certain of our teaching and learning support services for students and faculty; a first-year transition plan to pilot in Fall 2014; a well-defined plan for implementing all three tiers of the integrated Student Electronic Record System; and a focused plan for graduate and undergraduate student Early Warning Systems.

USES and GPSES Reports

A work group is updating campus progress on meeting the recommendation of the Undergraduate Student Experiences and Satisfaction (USES) and Graduate/Professional Student Experience and Satisfaction (GPSES) reports. These reports, based on analyses of student censuses, highlight areas of campus life where specific actions are called for to enhance students' experience on campus. Updates on progress have not been provided since 2008 (USES) and 2010 (GPSES). Benchmarks for success will be evidence of substantive progress since the last reports, changes to systems and processes that enable us to better meet established goals, and the identification of important remaining issues such as improving the campus climate and improving student satisfaction.

Standing Committee on Retention

In place since 2010, this committee of faculty and staff has studied campus data to identify:
- inter-group differences, especially for historically underrepresented groups, in undergraduate retention rates
- high-impact practices that correlate with retention
- strategies to promote access to these high-impact practices

Sufficient quantitative and qualitative information has been compiled to disseminate these findings and strategies to academic units and individual faculty. Benchmarks for success include heightened awareness of differences in retention across groups, the identification and adoption of best practices for the retention of URM students, and significant reduction of disparities between groups of students in retention rates, time to degree, graduation GPA, and post-graduate success.

Curriculum Review

All departments, colleges, and major programs have been asked to review their graduation rate data and curriculum requirements with an eye towards taking advantage of new knowledge about learning and teaching, responding to changing disciplinary needs, and improving time-to-degree. Benchmarks for success will be a reduction in the large variations in graduation requirements across departments and across colleges, such that we begin to see improved four-year graduation rates by 2016 for transfer students and 2018 for students who have arrived as freshmen.

Student Experience

The Six Colleges

Writing Center. The strategic planning process, in conjunction with the Education Initiative, has focused attention on the transformative power of high-impact educational practices like internships, study abroad, participation in research projects, and writing across the curriculum. For these experiences to have the greatest impact students must reflect upon and write about them. Working collaboratively, the college writing programs and the Center nurture in students the ability to write about their experiences in ways that will advance their personal and career goals. To fulfill this mission, the Writing Center, opened in Fall 2012, will need a second full-time writing professional and the support of a 50%-time administrative assistant. Benchmarks for success include: quantitative studies of students served and programs offered; qualitative study of improvements in writing as a result of contact with the Center; qualitative studies of tutoring effectiveness in writing support; collaborations with other campus units. Moreover, as the Writing Center meets metrics of success in providing support to undergraduate students, it might be cost-effective to provide resources that would allow the Center to expand its services to the graduate community, many of whom (especially international students) self-report challenges with academic writing. Sponsorship of facilitated dissertation-writing groups, moreover, could increase engagement of arts, humanities and social sciences doctoral students in the vulnerable period after advancement, and perhaps thereby increase Ph.D. completion rates.

First-Year Transition. The transition from high school, community college, or life abroad to UC San Diego is complex and longitudinal. We know that many new students are overwhelmed by the possibilities they confront, the rules they must navigate, and the cultural and psychological adjustments they need to make. To provide our students the sure footing needed for this journey, we propose the creation of a First-Year Transition Program. This program will help students navigate the classroom, select a major, find internships, learn how to conduct research, manage time, maintain academic integrity and build community on a diverse campus. The success of this program will be measured using student surveys, peer professional evaluation based on classroom observation, interviews with students and faculty, and comparison with national best practices. Benchmarks for success will include increased student ability to navigate campus, contact faculty, use libraries, and connect with other students.

Transfer Master Plan. UC San Diego does not have a coherent and comprehensive plan to provide transfer students a genuinely transformative educational experience. Departments and programs plan for transfer students in relative isolation from the colleges. Transfer students living on campus are placed in The Village, where they find it more difficult to engage in programs and activities in the college to which they belong. Faculty worry that the academic preparation of transfer students lags behind that of students who entered as freshmen, but current regulations make it difficult to take corrective measures. To address these and similar problems we need to develop a comprehensive campus plan for transfer students. Benchmarks for success will include increased transfer student satisfaction, greater participation of transfer students in college programs and activities, and improved graduation rates, time to degree, and post-graduate success. Additionally, we seek to reduce disparities between groups of students in each of these areas.

Experiential Learning. UC San Diego excels in providing high-impact experiential learning opportunities. We place students in cutting-edge laboratories and research facilities; we send students across the globe to live and learn; we engage students in public service programs at home and abroad. But the need for meaningful experiential learning opportunities outstrips our capacity to provide them. Students in STEM fields frequently complete their degrees without having had the opportunity to work in a research laboratory. Fewer than one-quarter of all undergraduates participate in study abroad programs. Students often have difficulty identifying internships and public service programs that match their interests and abilities, and securing faculty interested in mentoring them. We believe that a Senate-Administration task force should be charged to design, coordinate and implement a

comprehensive set of campus strategies. Benchmarks for success will include: increased participation by students, faculty and staff in public service projects, research, and study-abroad programs.

Funding Streams. To fully actualize the colleges' potential as living-learning communities, we recommend that funding for the colleges, which currently flows from three different Vice Chancellor areas, be unified in a single stream with the provost as the final fiscal and administrative authority within each college. Unifying funding streams would open the way to more creative, efficient and effective use of resources and people across all units within the college. It would eliminate myriad inconsistencies and conflicts inherent in a system in which Student Affairs and Residential Life staff in the colleges report up through the provosts, but in which the provosts have little or no say in the organizational, fiscal, and HR policies and procedures within which these staff operate. It would create stronger and more effective synergies across the major units of each college.   And it would improve business practices by eliminating the need to follow three different sets of policies and practices for HR, budgeting, etc.   Benchmarks for success include: greater consistency and cohesiveness in business practices; improved morale; and greater flexibility in training and job tasks so that assignments more closely match temporary and cyclical changes in workloads.

Student Affairs and Graduate Studies

Recruitment and Yield. UC San Diego should attract and enroll students of the highest capability who are representative of the diversity of the people of California. Both high school and community college students should be targeted. For each group we must develop and implement new approaches to reach and engage potential URM, low SES, LGBT, undocumented, first-generation, and non-resident students. We will strategically target schools, programs and regions that promise to yield a more diverse pool of students. We will also develop long-term relationships with communities and schools in order to create and sustain new pipelines to UC San Diego. Especially important will be the involvement of current students, faculty and staff, and alumni. No less crucial will be increases in financial aid, such as the Chancellor's Associates Scholarship Program. Similarly, we must sustain our efforts to recruit diverse pools of students for our doctoral and masters programs. Recent downward trends in the admissions and yield of under-represented minorities in our doctoral programs following implementation of the Graduate Student Growth and Excellence Initiative are worrisome after several years of steady growth in the numbers of URM applicants and new students across a range of disciplines. The Office of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, should continue its efforts at targeted outreach to URM students and the institutions that serve them, in collaboration with departments, faculty and exisiting students, but must also research reasons for declines in admission rates and yields. Benchmarks for overall success in the diversity arena for both undergraduate and graduate students will include application numbers, as well as admission and acceptance rates.

Retention. Though UC San Diego's overall retention rates are high, they are lower than expected for specific populations of undergraduate students, notably URM and first-generation students. (The retention rates of other groups, such as LGBT and undocumented students, are not currently known and need additional study.) Improved retention for these groups will require strong collaboration between Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to meet the academic, social, cultural and personal support needs of these students. The key benchmark for success will be retention rates for URM and first-generation students that mirror those of the general student population.

Community Building. Student surveys, strategic-planning town halls, focus groups and listening sessions point to two key areas for building a more inclusive community: increasing cross-cultural awareness,

civility and inclusivity; and creating artwork and public spaces that will make UC San Diego's physical environment more reflective of the diverse identies of our students, faculty and staff. New and more widely distributed cultural competence training programs, led by EDI and HR, will be provided for student leaders and key members of the faculty and staff. Civility and inclusivity will also be promoted by programs and activities designed to explore and promote culturally diverse art throughout the campus   Benchmarks for success will include: increased knowledge of and adherence to the principles of community; reduced number and severity of incidents of bias and discrimination; increased ability to work cooperatively with people from different cultural, national or ethnic backgrounds; increased satisfaction of all people with the working and learning environment.

Community building for graduate students also rests on ensuring opportunities for them to interact with other students beyond their immediate department/program. In part, this could be accomplished by ensuring that as many entering graduate students as possible have the opportunity to live with their colleagues in campus graduate housing. We have been moving towards the goal of offering two years of guaranteed housing for entering students, many of whom come from far outside the local area and have trouble in transitioning to the rigors of graduate study at the same time they are adjusting to a new community (or even country). But our progress in this regard is hampered by simultaneous growth in the graduate student body. Although we have brought new graduate housing on-line in recent years, the waiting list remains at around 1000 students. A new housing project will therefore be needed to meet demand. The key benchmark for success will be successful implementation of a housing guarantee for entering students and sustaining this once our graduate population reaches a steady state.

Real World Experiences. Experiential learning is a key component of a successful education, regardless of a student's major or intended career. To make this possible for every undergraduate student, we need to exponentially increase the number of opportunities to study abroad, hold an internship, engage in volunteer community service, and work as a research or creative assistant. All freshmen and new transfer students need to be informed about curricular and co-curricular programs so that they may participate in and self-consiously "mine" these experiences for transferrable skills. And we need to establish a campus clearinghouse for these opportunities, so that students and experience providers can be matched easily and quickly. Greater collaboration among colleges, departments, ORUs, and campus entities like the Careeer Services Center, Academic internship Program,the Campus Community Centers, and others, is underway under the aegis of the Education Initiative. Benchmarks for success include: number of, and participation in, experiential learning opportunities; comparable levels of participation for all groups of students, and increased educational engagement and student satisfaction.

For graduate students, more attention must be paid to the full spectrum of career paths available to them, including those outside academia, and providing students with information about these varied pathways as well as the transferrable skills that will allow them to succeed. A short term goal is for the campus to compete successfully for an NIH BEST award to pilot fomal course work, job exploration activities, and internship opportunities for doctoral students (and post-doctoral scholars) in biomedically-related fields, and to assess the effectiveness of these efforts. This should then allow for expansion of these activities to the graduate student population at large.

Community Engagement in Support of Student Access

UC San Diego will embrace a holistic and systemic approach to community engagement in support of student access. Building on and strengthening existing efforts, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Student

Affairs, and the Chancellor's Office will convene a campus and community council to facilitate and guide community outreach.

Chancellor's Associates Scholarship Program. Launched in Spring 2013, the Chancellor's Associates Scholarship Program ensures that low income students from three partner schools – Gompers Preparatory Academy, Lincoln High School, and The Preuss School—are able to afford UC San Diego. The program also provides recipients a range of academic and personal support services designed to maximize student success.   In its first year, 29 scholarships were awarded, demonstrating campus commitment to the local community and to thke promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion. The Chancellor's Office, Equity Diversity and Inclusion, and Student Affairs will collaborate to expand the program to include more students from schools and college preparation programs in the region.

CalSOAP.   Working under the direction of the California Student Aid Commission, the California Student Opportunity and Access Program (CalSOAP) for San Diego and Imperial Counties works with regional K-12 schools to improve the flow of information about postsecondary education and financial aid while raising the achievement levels of low-income and first-generation students. UC San Diego is the fiscal agent for the consortium; strong support by UC San Diego permitted CalSOAP to weather Federal fiscal instability associated with the sequester. UC San Diego is also a frequent partner in programs like "Dare to Dream College: The African-American Experience."   UC San Diego will continue to support CalSOAP in its important outreach efforts.

UniversityLink. UC San Diego will continue its commitment to access for San Diego and Imperial County community college transfer students. We crafted the UniversityLink program to increase access to high-achieving community college students without the financial resources needed to attend a UC outside their home region.   For students with a family income below $40,000 a year, and a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above, UniversityLink will provide guaranteed admission to UC San Diego. This is the first regional admissions program approved by BOARS since 2004, provides a model for other universities in the system. The key benchmark for success will be increased access to UC San Diego by regional community college students of all backgrounds and income levels.